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HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AS A MEANS TOWARDS SOCIAL JUSTICE: EVALUATION OF ALBANIAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION*

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1. *Introduction*

The international recognition of human rights, formalized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, marked a pivotal moment in embedding these rights within global, regional, and national legal frameworks¹. It also underscored the essential role of states in ensuring the recognition, protection, and implementation of human rights, aiming at the holistic development of human dignity. Among the various mechanisms at their disposal, education stands out as a fundamental means for individuals to understand and exercise their inherent rights and responsibilities². The pream-

* Contributo sottoposto a valutazione.

¹ P. BATELAAN, F. COOMANS, *The International basis for intercultural education including anti-racist and human rights education. A selection of articles from relevant documents, adopted by the governments of member states of the United Nations, UNESCO, the Organization on Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the Council of Europe*, UNESCO, 1999, pp. 5-15.

² S. CARGAS, G. MITOMA, *Introduction to the Special Issue on Human Rights in Higher Education*, in *Journal of Human Rights*, 18, 2019, 3, pp. 275-279.

ble of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights also supports this³ (United Nations [UN]), according to which «every individual and organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms».

Despite being a non-binding instrument, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR], from the moment of approval has received wide support and approval. Paragraph 2 of article 26 stipulates the aim of education highlighting the human personality and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, teaching individuals about the importance of these concepts, and encouraging them to uphold and protect them in their own lives and communities.

The UDHR is complemented by a series of binding international instruments that emphasise human rights and underscore education as a key means to ensure their effective implementation. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights affirms the universal right to education, emphasising that education should foster the comprehensive development of the individual, uphold human dignity, and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also underscores that education should empower individuals to actively participate in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among diverse groups, and support the United Nations' efforts to maintain peace⁴.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) of 1989 is another international instrument that requires state parties to «make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike»⁵. Article 29, mandates that children's ed-

³ UNITED NATIONS, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948.

⁴ S. CARGARS, *Fortifying the future of human rights with human rights education*, in *Journal of Human Rights*, 18, 2019, 3, pp. 293-307; *International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted on 16 December 1966, by General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) of UN, 1966.

⁵ *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, adopted on 20 November 1989, by General Assembly Resolution 44/25.

ucation should be directed towards developing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This conceptualization extends beyond the educational sector and is advocated by the United Nations as part of a comprehensive «lifelong learning» approach for all societal sectors⁶. The human rights encompassed in this framework are expansive, including those articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as a range of related international treaties and covenants, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, among others⁷. The aim of education is further elaborated in General Comment No. 1 of the United Nations⁸, according to which education is designed to provide the child with life skills, strengthen the child's capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and promote a culture which is infused with appropriate human rights values.

These aims reflected in various international and regional instruments are recapitulated as «human rights education» in the Plan of Action for the U.N. Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004 highlighting⁹:

- a) The strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- b) The full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;

⁶ UNITED NATIONS, OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *International Plan of Action for the Decade of Human Rights Education*, United Nations, 1997.

⁷ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *All-European Study on Education for Democratic Citizenship Policies*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2005, pp. 17-23.

⁸ UNITED NATIONS, *Annex IX General Comment No. 1*, 2001, Article 29 (1), *The Aims of Education*, CRC/GC/2001/1, 17 April 2001.

⁹ UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Human Rights Questions: Human Rights Questions, Including Alternative Approaches for Improving the Effective Enjoyment of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, A/51/506/Add.1, 12 December 1996.

- c) The promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality, and friendship among all nations.

Additionally, the World Programme for Human Rights Education (WPHRE), launched in 2005, provides a comprehensive framework for HRE efforts, with its first phase focusing on integrating HRE into primary and secondary school systems¹⁰. By embedding these protective measures into international law, these treaties aim to balance state involvement in education with the need to preserve individual freedoms and uphold human rights. These provisions underscore the critical role of education in fostering personal development and dignity, while also reinforcing the respect for and protection of fundamental human rights. HRE is essential for fostering a rights-conscious climate within educational systems globally. The legal frameworks supporting HRE are established at international, regional, and national levels, creating obligations for states to integrate HRE into their educational policies and curricula.

At the regional level, the European Convention on Human Rights has served as the primary foundation for the existence of a human right to HRE¹¹. HRE initiatives are guided by various key recommendations, including the Council of Europe (COE) Committee of Ministers Resolution (78) 41 on the Teaching of Human Rights dated 25 October 1978¹², Recommendation (85) 7 on Teaching and Learning about Human Rights in Schools dated 14 May 1985¹³, Recommendation 1346 on Human Rights

¹⁰ UNESCO, OHCHR, *Plan of Actions. World Program for Human Rights Education. First phase*, New York-Geneva, 2006, pp. 9-20.

¹¹ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR)*, as amended, 1950.

¹² COUNCIL OF EUROPE. COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS, *Resolution (78) 41 on the Teaching of Human Rights*, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 25 October 1978 at the 294th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, 1978.

¹³ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS, *Recommendation No. R (85) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Teaching and Learning about Human Rights in Schools*, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 1985 at the 385th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, 1985.

Education dated 1997¹⁴, and Recommendation on the European Convention on Human Rights in University Education and Professional Training issued on 12 May 2004¹⁵. Since the conclusion of the Cold War (1947-91), European regional organizations have undertaken numerous educational and training initiatives in the field of human rights¹⁶. The COE has integrated HRE into its broader programs on education for democratic citizenship. In May 2010, the COE further solidified its commitment by adopting the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education¹⁷.

The path of education on human rights cannot be implemented, if the schools themselves do not operate under the principles of democracy, autonomy, and basic freedoms and human rights. This requires educational programs from pre-university to higher education levels that provide knowledge of human rights, teachers trained in human rights education, and practical implementation in how the school is organized and in including all stakeholders in educational processes¹⁸. In a country like Albania, which has experienced a harsh dictatorship that used indoctrination to educate its citizens and instill political education in the education system, human rights education emerges as an urgent need. It has a particular role to play in the post-conflict rehabilitation of societies, particularly in countries in transformation to plural-

¹⁴ PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, *Recommendation 1346. Human rights education*, 1997.

¹⁵ COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS, *Recommendation Rec (2004)4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the European Convention on Human Rights in University Education and Professional Training*, adopted on 12 May 2004, at the 114th Session of the Committee of Ministers, 2004.

¹⁶ W. BENEDEK, *Understanding Human Rights. A Manual on Human Rights Education*, European Training and Research Center for Human Rights and Democracy (ETS), Graz, Austria, 2006, pp. 14-29.

¹⁷ COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS, *Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 11 May 2010 at the 120th Session, 2010.

¹⁸ M. ZEMBYLAS, A. KEET, *Critical Human Rights Education. Advancing Social-Justice-Oriented Educational Praxes*, Springer, Cham, 2019, pp. 1-16.

ist democracies¹⁹. It is essential for establishing the rule of law, upholding democratic principles, and raising awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms²⁰. Moreover, human rights education in Albania, as a post-communist country, carries a dual significance. Firstly, it serves to understand and distance the nation from the mistakes of its past. Secondly, it fosters the embrace of democratic principles and human rights, integrating them into the societal mindset.

2. *Theoretical structure*

The study of Human Rights as a formal academic program began to emerge in universities after World War II, particularly in the late 20th century²¹. The interdisciplinary field of human rights studies has blossomed in recent decades²². Numerous universities across Europe offer Human Rights as an academic program, available either as a distinct degree at the Bachelor's, Master's, or PhD level, or as a specialization within broader disciplines such as International Law, Political Science, or Social Sciences. Meanwhile, HRE has emerged as a burgeoning field within educational theory and practice, attracting heightened global attention and importance²³. This

¹⁹ W. BENEDEK, *Understanding Human Rights*, cit., pp. 14-29.

²⁰ F. TIBBITTS, *Human Rights Education in Schools in the Post-Communist Context*, in *European Journal of Education*, 29, 1994, 4, pp. 363-376; HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, *Human Rights in Post-Communist Albania*, Human Rights Watch, New York-Washington-Los Angeles-London-Brussels, 1996; H. MIÇO, *Addressing the right to education in Albania before and after the communist regime*, in *Proceeding book of the 7th International Conference on European Studies: The power and politics of transitional justice*, organised in Tirana by Epoka University Albania, Konrad Adenauer Institute Albania and Europa-University Flensburg Germany, National Library, Tirana Albania, 2020, pp. 91-117.

²¹ G. ANDREOPOULOS, *Human Rights Education in the Post-Cold War Context*, in *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997, pp. 9-21.

²² S. CARGAS, G. MITOMA, *Introduction to the Special Issue on Human Rights*, cit., pp. 275-279.

²³ M. BAJAJ, *Human rights education: Ideology, location, and approaches*, in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 33, 2011, pp. 481-508.

development, which accelerated alongside the rise of the human rights movement in the early 1990s, has led to the expansion of educational theory, practice, and research dedicated to this area²⁴.

HRE is enshrined in international law as an enabling right to know rights. There is a corresponding obligation on governments to fulfil this right by providing education about and for human rights²⁵. The growing corpus of human rights and equality legislation has implications for schools and there are increasing obligations on schools to address human rights and equality issues more proactively than heretofore. While issues related to the right to education, often framed in terms of equal access and provision, have long shaped educational policy and discourse since the adoption of the UDHR, the concept of education *in, for, and through* human rights is a more recent development. To date, this approach has been less influential.

International organizations and various researchers have sought to define HRE as the right to acquire knowledge about human rights and to utilize this knowledge for self-protection and the respectful treatment of others. The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights defines human rights education as «training, dissemination and information efforts aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights through the imparting of knowledge and skills and the molding of attitudes directed to:

- a) the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

²⁴ F. TIBBITTS, *Evolution of Human Rights Education Models*, in *Human Rights Education, Theory, Research, Praxis*, edited by M. BAJAJ, in *Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights*, 2017, pp. 69-96; J. LÖVGREN, *From nation-building to global citizenship: human rights education in the Nordic folk high schools*, in *Human Rights Education Review*, 5, 2022, 2, pp. 77-97.

²⁵ F. WALDRON, A. KAVANAGH, R. KAVANAGH, C. MAUNSELL, R. OBERMAN, M. OREILLY, S. PIKE, A. PRUNTY, B. RUANE, *Teachers, Human Rights and Human Rights Education: Knowledge, Perspectives and Practices of Primary School Teachers in Ireland*, The Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education, Dublin, 2011.

- b) the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity;
- c) the promotion of understanding, tolerance, gender equality, and friendship among all nations, Indigenous peoples, and racial, national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups; and,
- d) the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society. This definition extends beyond the school sector, with the United Nations advocating for human rights education across all segments of society as an integral component of a lifelong learning process for individuals»²⁶.

The Council of Europe in the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education defines HRE as follows: «Human rights education» means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices, and activities which aim, to equip learners with knowledge, skills, and understanding and developing their attitudes and behavior, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defense of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms²⁷. The Council of Europe defines Human Rights Education (HRE) as a comprehensive approach that includes education, training, awareness-raising, information dissemination, and various practices and activities. The goal of HRE is to equip learners with the necessary knowledge, skills, and understanding, while also shaping their attitudes and behaviors.

Another definition for HRE comes from the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and Training²⁸, according

²⁶ F. TIBBITTS, W.R. FERNEKES, *Human rights education*, in *Teaching and studying social issues: Major programs and approaches*, edited by S. TOTTEEN, J.E. PEDERSEN, IAP Information Age Publishing, 2011, pp. 87-117.

²⁷ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)7*, adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 11 May 2010 and the explanatory memorandum, 2010.

²⁸ UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council 16/1 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*, A/HRC/RES/16/1, 2011.

to which human rights education and training comprises all educational, training, information, awareness-raising, and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills, and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviors, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights. Emphasized in the United Nations definition of HRE is knowledge about human rights and tolerance/acceptance of others based on such knowledge²⁹.

Most scholars and practitioners agree that HRE must include both content and process related to human rights³⁰. According to Tibbitts «Nearly all formal literature associated with HRE will mention the importance of using participatory methods for effectively teaching about human rights»³¹. Amnesty International's recent Human Rights Friendly Schools framework integrates the processes and intended outcomes of HRE by emphasizing three key prepositions that holistically connect education and human rights: education *about* human rights (cognitive understanding), education *through* human rights (using participatory methods to develop skills for active citizenship), and education *for* human rights (empowering learners to voice and act against injustices). Within these broad areas of intersection, the following section explores var-

²⁹ M. BAJAJ, *Human rights education: Ideology, location, and approaches*, cit., pp. 481-508.

³⁰ N. FLOWERS, D. SHIMAN, *Teacher Education and the Human Rights Vision*, in *Human Rights Education for the 21st Century*, edited by G.J. ANDREOPOULOS, R.P. CLAUDE, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997, pp. 161-176; B. REARDON, *Human Rights Learning: Pedagogies and Politics of Peace*, in *A Pioneer in Education for Peace and Human Rights*, 2015, pp. 145-164; R. TIMSINA, *Empowerment in Human Rights Education Theories: Towards a Dialectical Model*, in *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 6, 2023, 10, pp. 262-269.

³¹ F. TIBBITTS, *Transformative Learning and Human Rights Education: Taking a Closer Look*, in *Intercultural Education*, 16, 2005, 2, pp. 107-113.

ious definitions and models of HRE that have emerged over the past six decades³².

Rooted in the modern-day movement's founding documents, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), to the World Programme for Human Rights Education, [WPHRE] (2005)³³, HRE must be recognized as an essential aspect for raising awareness, teaching advocacy, and research to play a critical role in addressing human rights problems. As an initiative of the United Nations, the WPHRE, which has been in operation since 2005, represents a pivotal advancement in the global endeavour to institutionalize human rights education across diverse sectors. WPHRE was established as a continuation and expansion of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)³⁴, structured into sequential phases to systematically address various sectors and issues within the broader human rights education agenda. Each phase builds on the achievements of its predecessors, reinforcing global commitments to human rights education³⁵.

- 1) First Phase (2005-2009) is focused on integrating human rights education into primary and secondary school systems, aiming to embed human rights principles and methodologies at the foundational levels of formal education.
- 2) Second Phase (2010-2014) shifted focus to higher education, developing human rights curricula and training programs for educators, civil servants, law enforcement, and

³² AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, *Human Rights Friendly Schools Project*, 2009; M. BAJAJ, *Human rights education: Ideology, location, and approaches*, cit., pp. 481-508.

³³ UNITED NATIONS, *World Programme for Human Rights Education*, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 14 July 2005, 59/113, 2005.

³⁴ OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *Follow up to the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education*, Commission on Human Rights Resolution, 2004/71, 2004.

³⁵ UNITED NATIONS, *World Programme for Human Rights Education*, cit., pp. 1-2.

- military personnel, to deepen the application of human rights principles in professional and academic contexts³⁶.
- 3) Third Phase (2015-2019) expanded efforts to include human rights training for media professionals and journalists, recognizing the media's critical role in promoting and protecting human rights³⁷.
 - 4) The Fourth Phase (2020-2024) emphasizes youth empowerment through human rights education, engaging young people as active participants in advocacy and education to cultivate a generation of informed global citizens³⁸.
 - 5) Fifth Phase (2025-2029) is dedicated to youth, while prioritizing children, with special emphasis on human rights in digital technologies, the environment, climate change, and gender equality. This phase aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly with target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals³⁹.

Each phase is accompanied by specific resolutions, action plans, and reports that provide detailed guidance for implementing human rights education, making the WPHRE a vital and adaptable framework in the global effort to foster a culture of human rights through education. One of the key accomplishments of the WPHRE was the drafting and adoption of the 2011 United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (UNDHRET). This fourteen-article dec-

³⁶ UNITED NATIONS. GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Promotion and Protection of all Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Including the Right to Development*, Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council, 12/4, World Programme for Human Rights Education, A/HRC/RES/12/4, 2009.

³⁷ UNITED NATIONS. GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council 27/12, World Programme for Human Rights Education: adoption of the plan of action for the third phase*, 2014.

³⁸ UNITED NATIONS. GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 27 September 2018 39/3, World Programme for Human Rights Education*, A/HRC/RES/39/3, 2018.

³⁹ UNITED NATIONS. GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 11 October 2023 54/7, World Programme for Human Rights Education*, A/HRC/RES/54/7, 2023.

laration begins by affirming the right of every individual to be informed about all human rights, effectively establishing a human right to HRE. It further provides a comprehensive definition of HRE and calls on states to enact legislation, develop policies, and allocate resources to support the implementation of HRE⁴⁰.

The WPHRE is reflected in the norms established by the Council of Europe, which adopted the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. Although the legal status of the Charter on EDC/HRE is that of a recommendation by the Committee of Ministers under Article 15(b) of the Statute and not a binding instrument, it carries significant weight, as emphasized by the use of the term «Charter»⁴¹. Since its adoption in 2010, the Charter has become a key reference in the Council of Europe's ongoing normative work, including the development of the Reference Framework for Competences for Democratic Culture [RFCDC]. The RFCDC is not intended as a mandated or recommended European curriculum but rather as a reference document designed to help European education systems define specific learning outcomes. It is intended for use across various levels of formal education from pre-school to higher education. The democratic competencies outlined in the RFCDC, along with their descriptors, provide greater specificity to the standards established in the Education for Democratic Citizenship [EDC] framework⁴².

⁴⁰ UNITED NATIONS, *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*, adopted by the General Assembly, Resolution 66/137, A/RES/66/137, 19 December 2011, 2011.

⁴¹ K. GRIMONPREZ, *The Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (EDC/HRE)*, in *The European Union and Education for Democratic Citizenship. Legal foundations for EU learning at school*, edited by FACULTY OF LAW, ECONOMICS AND FINANCE UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG, 20, 2020, pp. 73-108.

⁴² D. KERR, *Implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education*, Council of Europe, 2012, pp. 1-5; COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Standing Conference of Ministers of Education «Governance and Quality Education»*, 24th session Helsinki, Finland, 2013.

According to the international legal framework, HRE is the process of teaching and learning about the rights and responsibilities that are inherent to all human beings. By integrating human rights concepts into educational systems and community programs, HRE encourages critical thinking, social responsibility, and active participation in the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide.

3. Human Rights Education in the Albanian Legal Framework

The denial of human rights in communist Albania is already a reality known to all. Albania experienced a Stalinist regime, which not only did not recognize the so-called «socialism with a human face»⁴³, which was recognized by the other countries of the Communist East, but on the contrary reached absurdities such as total denial of beliefs, almost complete denial of private property, and introducing of the concept of re-sentence for political prisoners, making their ordeal unending.

With the democratic changes, Albania in the 1990s became a party to a series of international instruments adopted by the United Nations, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁴⁴, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁴⁵, the Convention on the Rights of the Child⁴⁶, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment⁴⁷, the

⁴³ G. HODOS, *Prelude in Albania*, in *Show Trials. Stalinist Purges in Eastern Europe, 1948-1954*, Praeger, First Edition, 1987, pp. 6-10.

⁴⁴ UNITED NATIONS, *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights*, adopted on 16 December 1966, by General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI), 1966.

⁴⁵ UNITED NATIONS, *International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, adopted on 16 December 1966, by General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI), 1966.

⁴⁶ UNITED NATIONS, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Adopted on 20 November 1989 by General Assembly Resolution 44/25, 1989.

⁴⁷ UNITED NATIONS, *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, adopted on 10 December 1984,

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women⁴⁸, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination⁴⁹, which enshrined fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Albania's ratification of international human rights instruments demonstrates a strong commitment to upholding human rights and offers a clear overview of the applicable human rights standards within the country. As a Member State of the Council of Europe since July 13, 1995, Albania has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights⁵⁰, placing it under the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights [ECtHR]⁵¹. Additionally, Albania is a party to several key treaties, including the revised European Social Charter⁵², the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings⁵³, the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment⁵⁴, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities⁵⁵.

by General Assembly resolution 39/46, 1984.

⁴⁸ UNITED NATIONS, *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, New York, 18 December 1979, adopted on 18 December 1979, by United Nations General Assembly, 1979.

⁴⁹ UNITED NATIONS, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, adopted on 21 December 1965, by UN General Assembly resolution 2106 (XX), 1965.

⁵⁰ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR)*, as amended, 1950.

⁵¹ L. BIANKU, *Albania's long path towards European human rights standards*, in *The Impact of the ECHR on Democratic Change in Central and Eastern Europe. Judicial Perspectives*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, pp. 13-38.

⁵² COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *European Social Charter*, Turin, 18.X.1961, European Treaty Series - No. 35, 1961.

⁵³ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*, Warsaw, 16 May 2005, Council of Europe Treaty Series - No. 197, 2005.

⁵⁴ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)*, European Treaty Series - No. 126, 1987.

⁵⁵ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, ETS No. 157, 1998.

During the transition period, Albania has developed the legal framework to align with these international and regional obligations. The preamble of the Albanian Constitution explicitly commits to the establishment of a democratic and social state governed by the rule of law and to the guarantee of human rights and freedoms as a fundamental pledge of the people⁵⁶. Notably, the current Constitution, adopted in 1998, is the first in Albania's constitutional history to explicitly enshrine human dignity as a core constitutional principle. According to Article 3, «Human dignity, rights, and freedoms ... are the foundation of this state, which has the duty to respect and protect them». This recognition aligns with the international consensus that human dignity is the cornerstone of human rights. Education is regarded as essential to realizing human dignity, which is why the right to education is recognized as a fundamental human right⁵⁷. The Constitution of the Republic of Albania affirms the right to education as a basic human right and freedom, ensuring its equal enjoyment and realization for all individuals, without discrimination based on gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, political, religious, or philosophical beliefs, as well as economic, educational, social, or parental status.

The constitutional provisions on education in Albania are operationalized through the Law on Pre-University Education System⁵⁸, which establishes the structure of the educational system while embedding principles of equality, non-discrimination, and respect for human rights. Schools are tasked with educating students to recognize, value, and exercise their hu-

⁵⁶ *Constitution of the Republic of Albania*, adapted by the law no. 8417, dated 21 October 1998, as amended.

⁵⁷ K. BEITER, *The Right to Education and the Disputed Category of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, in *The protection of the right to education by International Law*, vol. 82, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden/Boston, 2006, pp. 47-85; L. OMARI, A. ANASTASI, *E drejta kushtetuese*, Publishing House Dajti 2000, Tiranë, 2017, pp. 165-172; L. BIANKU, *Drejt praktikës: Përdorimi i Jurispridencës së Gjykatës së Strasburgut në Nivel Vendas*, Publishing House Tipografia Dollonja, 2020, pp. 372-376.

⁵⁸ *Law On Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania*, Pub. L. No. 69/2012, 21 June 2012.

man rights, making educational institutions vital in implementing these rights as the cornerstone of children's education. Specific rights are enshrined in the law on the pre-university education system, which serves as the legal framework guiding teachers' responsibilities. According to Article 5 of this law, the right to education is guaranteed free from discrimination, while Article 6 underscores the general principle of respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights, with a particular focus on children's rights. Student rights are further protected through institutional mechanisms such as the Student Government, which plays a key role in safeguarding and advancing student rights⁵⁹. The Pre-University Education Curriculum Framework also identifies civic competence – encompassing the understanding, advocacy, and exercise of children's rights – as one of the core competencies.

Furthermore, Albania's National Strategy on Education (2021-2026) outlines objectives that emphasize the integration of democratic citizenship and human rights education within school curricula⁶⁰. In alignment with this strategy, the Law on Protection from Discrimination mandates the incorporation of non-discrimination principles in educational policies and curricula, ensuring a comprehensive approach to Human Rights Education (HRE)⁶¹. The National Strategy on Education emphasizes inclusive education, the promotion of democratic values, and the cultivation of critical thinking skills among students, which are consistent with the broader aims of HRE.

The curriculum framework outlines educational objectives focused on «building and developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary for a democratic society; fostering independent and holistic development; contributing to

⁵⁹ ALBANIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE, *On the organization and functioning of students' government*, Ministry of Education and Science Instruction No. 25, dated 02 August 2013, Official Gazette no. 141, pp. 6108, 2013.

⁶⁰ ALBANIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, *On the approval of the National Education Strategy 2021-2026 and the action plan for its implementation*, Decision no. 621, dated 22 October 2021 of the Council of Ministers, 2021.

⁶¹ *Law On Protection Against Discrimination*, Pub. L. No. 10 221, dated 04 February 2010.

personal well-being and the advancement of Albanian society; and constructively addressing life's challenges»⁶². Among these goals is the preparation of students with the values essential for participation in a democratic society, highlighting the need for a more prominent integration of HRE within the Albanian educational curriculum. This preparation for human rights should not be limited to pre-university education but should also extend to higher education curricula, ensuring a comprehensive approach to human rights education at all levels of the educational system.

To effectively implement HRE within the educational system, the training of teachers plays a crucial role. Teachers are the primary agents responsible for transmitting knowledge, values, and competencies related to human rights. Without adequate training in HRE, educators may struggle to effectively integrate human rights principles into their teaching practices, limiting students' understanding and appreciation of these fundamental rights⁶³.

The development of teacher training in HRE and the phases of the WPHRE are particularly relevant in the context of Albania's educational development. Each phase of the WPHRE has emphasized the integration of human rights education across different education levels, and teacher training has been a critical component in ensuring the success of these initiatives⁶⁴.

Given the scarcity of studies on the development of human rights and HRE within the Albanian context, this article explores the crucial role that teachers play in fostering a culture of human rights. By examining the legal framework of HRE, the article highlights the evaluation of Albanian teachers' training in human rights education and the teacher's role in shaping at-

⁶² ALBANIAN MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS, *Curriculum Framework of Pre-University Education Republic of Albania*, 2014.

⁶³ A. OSLER, *Human rights education, postcolonial scholarship, and action for social justice*, in *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 43, 2015, 2, pp. 244-274.

⁶⁴ UNITED NATIONS, *World Programme for Human Rights Education*, cit., pp. 1-2.

titudes and behaviors in line with human rights and freedoms, contributing to the development of informed, empathetic, and socially responsible students in Albania's educational landscape. Additionally, it will underscore the connection between teacher qualifications and cultivating a human rights culture through qualitative observation and analysis of the curricula of universities offering teaching programs in Albania. Taking into consideration the first two phases of WPHRE, the article aims to address the following research questions:

- 1) What is the role of law and legal knowledge in creating legally literate teachers focused on children's rights in education?
- 2) How knowledgeable are teachers about Human Rights Education (HRE)?
- 3) What is the connection between teacher qualifications and the cultivation of a human rights culture in Albania?

These questions guide the exploration of human rights education and the role of teachers in fostering a respectful and inclusive school environment in Albania. They will shed light as well, on the relationship between teacher qualifications and human rights education, the current level of teachers' knowledge on the subject, and the broader context of human rights culture in Albania.

3.1. Methodology

The methodology used in this paper involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore the role of HRE in the Albanian educational system. The specific methods include legal framework examination which helps explore the legal foundations that support and mandate HRE, both internationally and domestically. The paper involves qualitative observation and analyses of the curricula of universities offering teaching programs in Albania. This anal-

ysis aims to understand how HRE is integrated into teacher training programs and to assess the extent to which these programs prepare teachers to foster a human rights culture. Moreover, an online survey was developed to gather data on teachers' knowledge and practices regarding HRE. This survey aims to analyze the knowledge and awareness of teachers for promoting a human rights climate within schools. The responses from the online survey are analyzed to identify the gaps and needs in teachers' qualifications concerning HRE. Overall, the methodology combines legal framework examination, curriculum analysis, and empirical data collection through surveys to provide a comprehensive understanding of how HRE is implemented in Albania in the framework of the WPHRE and Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

4. Human Rights Education and Teacher Qualifications

4.1. Connection between the cultivation of HRE and teacher qualifications

The connection between teacher qualification and the cultivation of a human rights culture is multifaceted. In their work, teachers establish a network of collaboration with students, parents, colleagues, school administrators, the community, interest groups, and other stakeholders involved in the implementation of the curriculum. In this context, the knowledge and culture of human rights represent a crucial dimension that teachers must recognize, implement, and foster. Understanding and knowledge of HRE should be an integral part of their comprehensive education, beginning at the initial stages of their professional journey when they are still pre-service teachers⁶⁵. As their experience and professional expertise develop, teachers should engage in various training programs that fo-

⁶⁵ F. TIBBITTS, W.R. FERNEKES, *Human rights education*, cit., pp. 87-117.

cus on specific elements of HRE, such as children's rights, professional ethics, human accountability, the principle of equality, and diversity, among others. Whether these dimensions are well-established among Albanian teachers will be assessed through the data collected from the survey conducted. It is crucial that HRE incorporates the «negative» lived experiences of injustice, exclusion, or discrimination as a means to build children's capacity and develop the legal knowledge and skills that will enable them to identify and challenge violations of their own rights and the rights of others⁶⁶.

4.2. *School curriculum as a means to support HRE*

HRE should not be viewed merely as foundational knowledge for the general formation of teachers. One of the most critical aspects of implementing HRE is its integration into the school curriculum. Teachers possess the capacity to embed human rights principles across various subjects, thereby offering an innovative approach to the teaching process. According to Brett et al. «Knowledge and understanding about the key content, concepts, values, and organizational principles of EDC/HRE matters. Teachers who know more about a subject are likely to be more interesting, effective, and adventurous in the ways in which they teach. They are able to create and select teaching/learning methods and activities that develop students' understanding and skills appropriately»⁶⁷. The use of diverse teaching methods and techniques that encourage critical thinking about human rights provides teachers with the opportunity to equip students with knowledge and skills related to HRE. However, if teachers lack sufficient

⁶⁶ L. LUNDY, G. MARTÍNEZ SAINZ, *The role of law and legal knowledge for a transformative human rights education: addressing violations of children's rights in formal education*, in *Human Rights Education Review*, 1 2018, 2, pp. 4-24.

⁶⁷ P. BRETT, P. MOMPOINT-GAILLARD, MH. SALEMA, *How all teachers can support citizenship and human rights education: a framework for the development of competencies*, Council of Europe Publishing, 2009, pp. 21-23.

knowledge of these principles, have minimal university-level training, and do not engage in continuous professional development in HRE, it becomes challenging for them to have a positive influence on their students.

Various approaches have been suggested for how teachers can connect HRE with the curriculum. Starkey⁶⁸ advocates for the pedagogical method of using narratives: «A pedagogical approach that has been advocated as enabling students to understand the powerful potential of human rights is the use of narratives. From a pedagogical perspective, biographical narratives based on well-known cases illustrate ways in which courageous individuals gather support to challenge those with the power to end injustices». In the teaching process, the narrative method can be effectively applied across many subjects within the curriculum, providing a powerful tool for fostering HRE principles in students.

4.3. Role of teacher training programs in enhancing HRE

The educational responsibility within the HRE framework's knowledge and values component is primarily concerned with teaching students about human rights and enhancing their understanding of the values inherent in them⁶⁹. It is widely accepted that improving the quality and effectiveness of HRE can only be achieved by focusing on teachers and teacher educators. Consequently, teacher educators must be experts in human rights education, possessing both in-depth knowledge of human rights and the necessary teaching skills, as well as a commitment to practicing human rights within society. Cen-

⁶⁸ H. STARKEY, *Classroom counternarratives as transformative multicultural citizenship education*, in *Multicultural Education Review*, 13, 2021, 3, pp. 299-244.

⁶⁹ C. ROBINSON, L. PHILLIPS, A. QUENNERSTEDT, *Human rights education: developing a theoretical understanding of teacher's responsibilities*, in *Educational Review*, 72, 2018, 2, pp. 220-241.

tral and state governments should prioritize both pre-service and continuous in-service teacher education programs⁷⁰.

Teacher training programs play a crucial role in developing and reinforcing human rights principles among students. This can be achieved through processes such as a comprehensive understanding of human rights via foundational human rights documents; pedagogical competencies in implementing the teaching and learning process for human rights; continuous professional development of teachers' skills; engaging students in interactive teaching processes; and involving them in activities related to the broader HRE framework. These efforts can elevate the level of understanding and application of HRE.

Knowledge of human rights should be approached by several dimensions such as understanding the social and historical context of the country where one lives; curriculum adaptation to incorporate elements of human rights knowledge and understanding; and teacher training to integrate HRE knowledge comprehensively. The specific manner in which this process unfolds in each country depends on local educational systems, which vary significantly, particularly in the degree of discretion teachers have in setting and achieving their own teaching goals. Nevertheless, teachers will always be the key figures in making new initiatives successful⁷¹. The teacher's role in teaching and learning is therefore seen as a form of governance, with the basic assumption that teachers' thinking and actions are grounded in rationalities concerning children, rights, and the teacher's role in educating children about human rights⁷². For this reason, special attention in our social context should be directed towards teachers in the application and implementation of fundamental human rights principles.

⁷⁰ G. KAUR, N. MAKKAR, *Human Rights Education in Teacher Training Programs*, in *International Journal of Research in Education Methodology*, 5, 2014, 3, pp. 689-692.

⁷¹ OHCHR, *ABC: Teaching human rights. Practical activities for primary and secondary schools*, HR/PUB/DECADE/2003/1, United Nations Publications No. 4, 2003.

⁷² L. ISENSTRÖM, A. QUENNERSTEDT, *Governing rationalities in children's human rights education*, in *International Journal of Educational Research*, 100, 2020, 101546.

5. Evaluation of Albanian teachers' training on HRE

To gauge teachers' knowledge of HRE and its application in student interactions, a questionnaire is devised. The study collected data to assess teachers' awareness and grasp of HRE principles, and their integration into the curriculum, and to pinpoint challenges they encounter in its implementation. The questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms. The questionnaire comprised 15 questions, including 13 multiple-choice queries and 2 open-ended prompts.

The questionnaire was completed by 120 Albanian teachers working in pre-university education, within the Elbasan district, representing both urban and rural educational institutions encompassing primary, 9-year, and secondary education levels, ensuring a diverse sample. By analyzing the responses, crucial insights are gathered into teachers' familiarity with HRE, identified areas for enhancement, and evaluated the extent of HRE incorporation across pre-university curricula. The questions were organized into 6 different sections. Each section of the questionnaire was tailored to address specific objectives, facilitating a comprehensive evaluation.

5.1. Participants and their demographics

The questionnaire was completed by 120 Albanian teachers working in pre-university education. Participants were randomly selected from basic and secondary schools. The schools were located both in city and rural areas. According to the demographic data collected through the questionnaire, participants included young and experienced teachers of different genders. The participants held various positions within the schools. The questionnaire was filled out individually by teachers online, without any possibility of intervention. The questionnaire ensured the preservation of confidentiality and informed participants that the data of the questionnaire would be valid only for study purposes. In the sections below,

questions from the questionnaire are indicated by the abbreviations Q1 for Question 1, Q2 for Question 2, etc.

The first section of the questionnaire showed that the participants varied demographically. Concerning the age group (Q1), 8 participants (6.8%) are aged 25-34 years, 56 participants (46.7%) are aged 35-44 years, 41 participants (34.2%) are aged 45-54 years, and 15 participants (12.5%) are aged over 55 years. In terms of gender (Q2), the data shows that 101 participants (84.2%) are female, and 19 participants (15.8%) are male. In terms of work experience, (Q3) the distribution among the surveyed teachers shows that 1 participant (0.8%) has 1 year of experience, 8 participants (6.8%) have 1-5 years of experience, 15 participants (12.5%) have 6-10 years of experience, 46 participants (38.3%) have 11-20 years of experience, and 50 participants (41.7%) have more than 20 years of experience. Finally, regarding educational attainment (Q4), 9 participants (7.6%) have completed only the first cycle of Bachelor's studies, 91 participants (76.5%) have completed both Bachelor's and Master's degrees, 5 participants (4.2%) hold a Doctor of Science degree, and 14 participants (11.8%) have completed their education in higher pedagogical institutes.

5.2. Results

Completion of the questionnaire resulted in quantitative and qualitative data, which helped define the theoretical and explanatory framework of the study. The collected data highlighted the teachers' level of knowledge and understanding of HRE, which differed according to age group and educational background. The deficiencies encountered served as an indicator of the work needed to be done to enhance teachers' ability to deliver HRE and to empower them with principles of equality, non-discrimination, and respect for human dignity in their interactions with students.

The second Section of the questionnaire aims to get information about the teachers' level of knowledge and under-

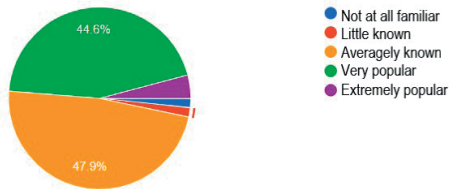
standing of children's rights education. In Q5: *How familiar are you with the concept of Human Rights Education?*, the data show that 2 participants or 1.7% of them do not know the concept of HRE; 2 participants or 1.7% of them have little knowledge about HRE; 58 participants 48.3% have average knowledge; 53 participants or 44.2% are very familiar with this concept and 5 participants or 4.2% of them are extremely familiar with the concept of HRE. The majority of teachers are moderate to very familiar with HRE, suggesting a good foundational awareness, although there is room for deepening this understanding.

Figure 1: *The level of familiarity with the concept of HRE*

Section 2: Knowledge and Understanding of HRD

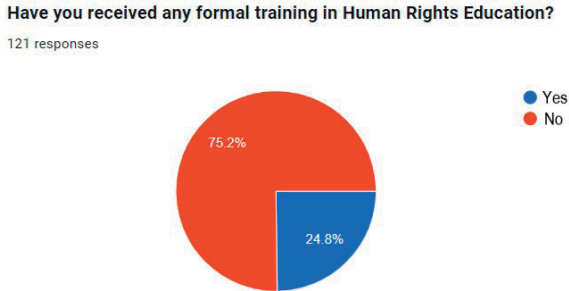
How familiar are you with the concept of Human Rights Education?

121 responses



The next question (Q6) asked, *Have you received any formal training in Human Rights Education?*, the teachers declare that only 29 of them or 24.2% have received training in human rights education, while 91 participants 71.8% have never been trained in this field. Regarding the topics of the training required in Q7, the teachers explained that the topics were focused on issues of human rights, disability, strengthening democratic citizenship, and cooperation with each other, lasting from 1 to 3 days. Data show a significant gap in formal training, which could impact the effectiveness of HRE implementation in schools.

Figure 2: *The percentage of respondents who have received formal training in HRE*



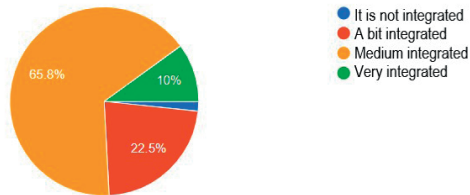
Section 3 of the questionnaire, which focuses on the integration of HRE into the curriculum of Albanian pre-university education, reveals varying levels of integration. The results for Q8, regarding the extent of HRE integration, indicate that a small percentage of participants (1.7%) believe it is not integrated at all, while 21.8% feel it is integrated to a small extent. A majority of 66.4% of participants report that HRE is moderately integrated, and 10.1% believe it is very well integrated into their school's curriculum. The data depicted in Figure 3 suggests that while most teachers perceive a moderate level of HRE integration, a significant portion recognizes the need for further enhancements, both in the content of the curriculum and in the frequency with which HRE topics are addressed.

Figure 3: *The extent to which HRE is integrated into the school's curriculum*

Section 3: Integrating HRD into the Curriculum

To what extent is Human Rights Education integrated into your school's curriculum?

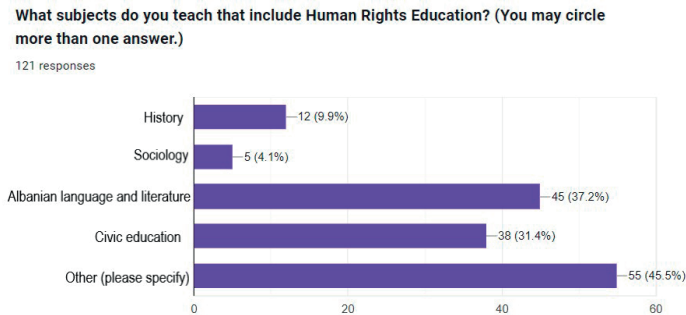
120 responses



The answer to (Q9) is related to the involvement of HRE in the teaching process. The responses revealed that 7.5% of participants rarely incorporate these topics, 24.2% sometimes include them, 59.2% often do so, and 9.2% always integrate human rights education into their teaching practices.

Another question (Q10) sought to obtain information on the subjects that incorporate human right education. Specifically, the question asked, *What subject do you teach that includes HRE?*, as shown in Figure 4, the majority of respondents (54.5%) mentioned subjects such as history, sociology, civic education, and Albanian language and literature.

Figure 4: *The subjects in which participants incorporate HRE into their teaching*



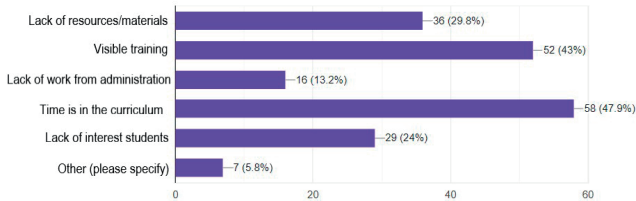
The answers to Q11 provided data on the extent of challenges encountered in the implementation of HRE: *What are the main challenges you face in implementing HRE?* The data analysis presented in Figure 5 highlights several challenges faced by educators in implementing HRE within their teaching practices. A significant portion of participants, 43.2%, identified insufficient training in HRE as a major obstacle, while 47.5% pointed out that limited time during lessons restricts the inclusion of more human rights topics. Additionally, 30% of respondents reported a lack of resources or diverse materials as a key challenge, and 23.3% noted a lack of student interest. Concerns about inadequate support from the administration were raised by 12.5% of participants. Lastly, only 5.8% mentioned other specific challenges related to the implementation of HRE. These findings suggest that improving teacher training, resource availability, and time allocation could enhance the integration of HRE into the curriculum.

Figure 5: *The main challenges faced in implementing HRE*

Section 4: Challenges in HRE Implementation

**What are the main challenges you face in implementing Human Rights Education?
(Choose up to three)**

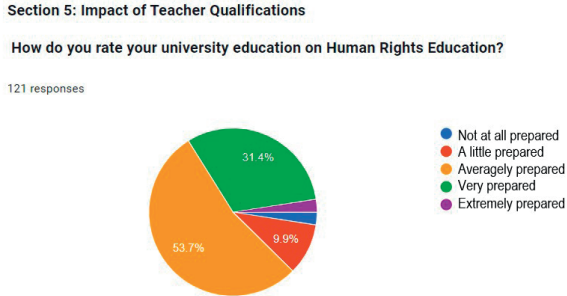
121 responses



These responses reflect the varied challenges educators face in effectively integrating HRE into their teaching practices. The primary obstacles to effective HRE implementation are inadequate training and resources, alongside time constraints and varying levels of student engagement.

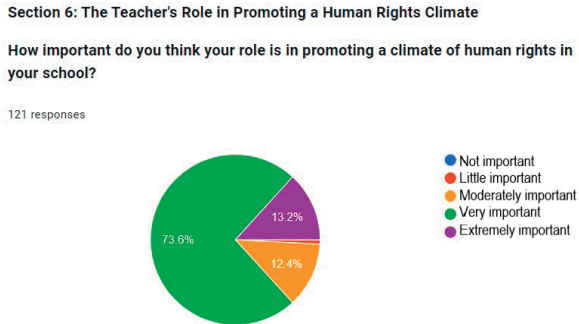
Another question (Q12) aimed to evaluate university training in HRE: *How do you rate your university education in HRE?* The analysis of responses reveals that a small fraction, 2.5% of participants, reported having no university training in human rights education. A slightly larger group, 10%, felt minimally prepared. The majority, 53.3%, indicated they were moderately prepared, while 31.7% considered themselves to be very well-prepared. Only 2.5% of respondents felt exceptionally prepared in their training on HRE. These findings suggest that university training in HRE is generally effective, with a majority of teachers feeling adequately prepared. However, there is room for improvement to enhance overall readiness and ensure that more educators feel confident in their HRE training.

Figure 6: *Participants' ratings of their university education on HRE*



In response to survey question Q13, which asked participants to evaluate the importance of the teacher's role in promoting a climate of human rights, the findings indicate a strong consensus on the significance of this responsibility. Only 0.8% of respondents consider this role to be of little importance, while 12.5% view it as moderately important. A substantial 73.3% believe their role is very important, and 13.3% regard it as extremely important. These results highlight the overwhelming majority opinion among teachers that their role in fostering a climate of human rights within their schools is crucial.

Figure 7: *The importance of teachers' role in promoting HRE*



In response to the open-ended question (Q14), *What specific actions do you take to promote a human rights climate in your class?*, participants provided a variety of strategies they implement. Teachers reported familiarizing students with legal provisions on student rights and responsibilities, facilitating discussions on human rights topics, and dedicating educational hours specifically to human rights education. They also encourage respect for diverse opinions, organize competitions, and engage students in activities that foster an understanding of human rights. Additional efforts include creating visual materials, reading and discussing the European Convention on Human Rights, promoting dialogue on human rights issues, familiarizing students with key human rights documents, conducting group discussions, raising awareness on various human rights aspects, and assigning individual projects focused on human rights themes. These diverse actions demonstrate a proactive and comprehensive approach by educators to cultivate a classroom environment that prioritizes and promotes human rights principles and understanding among students.

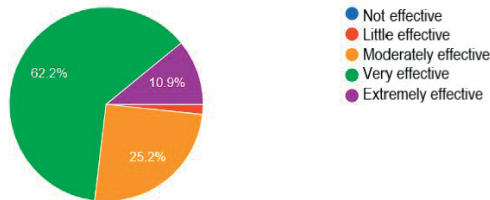
In the final question (Q15), participants were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts in promoting a hu-

man rights climate among students. The responses reveal varying perceptions of effectiveness. A small minority of 1.7% of participants consider these actions to be of little effectiveness, while 24.6% view them as moderately effective. The majority, 62.7%, believe that their efforts are very effective, and 11% of participants state that their actions are extremely effective in fostering a human rights climate among students. Overall, these findings suggest that teachers generally recognize and value their role in promoting a human rights climate and are confident that their efforts have a positive impact on creating such an environment in their classrooms.

Figure 8: *Perceptions of the effectiveness of actions aimed at promoting HRE among students*

In your opinion, how effective are these actions in promoting a climate of human rights among students?

119 responses



6. *Some reflections on the implementation of the right to HRE*

HRE is a critical component in fostering a society that respects, promotes, and upholds the fundamental rights and freedoms inherent to all individuals. HRE encompasses the teaching and learning of the principles enshrined in human rights documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Hu-

man Rights⁷³, and aims to cultivate a culture of respect, tolerance, and equality.

The legislative analysis in the Albanian legal framework in the field of education showed that the country is giving priority to HRE at the educational institution level including schools, colleges, and universities. The legal framework is focused on integrating human rights education into primary and secondary school systems, following the first phase of the WPHRE⁷⁴. The findings obtained from the questionnaire showed that the role of law and legal knowledge in creating legally literate teachers focused on HRE is particularly important. However, the survey showed in Q6 that the majority of teachers (71.8%) declared that they had never been trained in this field.

The critical role of teacher training in HRE is evident, as well-prepared educators are better positioned to cultivate a culture of respect for human rights both within their classrooms and in the broader educational environment. Effective training, not only enhances teachers' capacity to deliver HRE content but also enables them to exemplify the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and respect for human dignity in their interactions with students. However, in Q11 a substantial proportion of participants, 43.2%, identified insufficient HRE training as a significant obstacle, while 47.5% indicated that the limited time available during lessons restricts the integration of additional human rights topics. Although the second phase of the WPHRE emphasizes developing curricula and training programs at the higher education level, the implementation of HRE in Albania's pre-university and university education system remains an urgent priority.

Regarding the connection between teacher qualifications and the cultivation of a human rights culture in Albania, the results of Q15 demonstrate that the majority of participants, 62.7%, believe that their efforts are very effective, and 11% of

⁷³ UNITED NATIONS, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, cit.

⁷⁴ UNITED NATIONS, *World Programme for Human Rights Education*, cit., pp. 1-2.

participants state that their actions are extremely effective in fostering a human rights climate among students. These results indicate a strong consensus among teachers that the actions they undertake are largely effective in fostering a human rights-oriented environment in their classrooms. The data collected from the questionnaire provide valuable insights into the recognition and understanding of HRE among teachers, as well as the assessment of its implementation within the Albanian education curriculum. More than 50% of teachers acknowledging a need for additional training in human rights education highlights the necessity for specialized modules within higher education curricula.

Moreover, efforts have been made to integrate human rights education into the national curriculum. Subjects such as civic education, history, and literature include components that address human rights issues. Additionally, initiatives have been undertaken to introduce standalone human rights courses in schools. However, the extent and effectiveness of these integrations vary, and there is an ongoing need for comprehensive curriculum reform to ensure that human rights principles are systematically covered.

This perspective is further supported by the responses provided by Albania in the *Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe* conducted by the Council of Europe. Despite the inclusion of key competencies in the Curriculum Framework within Albanian legislation, HRE is only partially integrated, particularly in Sociology, which is an elective subject. This limited integration compromises both the quality and equality of HRE for all students (Q4)⁷⁵.

The report also highlights the necessity of incorporating citizenship and HRE objectives and principles into education laws, policies, and strategic objectives across all levels of education, with particular emphasis on higher education, youth policy, and non-formal education⁷⁶. The need to embed the

⁷⁵ COUNCIL OF EUROPE, *Albania 2016 Report on the State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*, A questionnaire filled in by the Institute for Development of Education, 2016.

⁷⁶ *Ivi*, sec. 2, art. 5.

right to HRE within the current legal framework and education policies, both in formal and non-formal education, as well as in youth policy, digital technologies, environmental issues, climate change, and gender equality, has been identified as a priority in the fifth phase of the WPHRE⁷⁷.

Research indicates that despite advancements, persistent challenges continue to hinder the full integration of HRE in Albania. A major obstacle is the limited availability of resources within schools, including adequate teaching materials and trained educators proficient in HRE delivery, which significantly hampers the provision of comprehensive human rights instruction. The legal analysis and data collected from the questionnaire regarding teachers' knowledge of HRE reveal that the state's role in implementing the right to HRE is crucial and decisive for the multilayered development of HRE across all segments of Albanian society.

Being that Albania, along with 192 other member states of the United Nations, has adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*⁷⁸, it is essential for the country to conduct continuous analyses regarding the implementation of HRE as part of its assessment of legal efficiency. Furthermore, this process should be accompanied by legal measures, action plans, and activities as part of the education strategy 2021-2026 to effectively implement HRE at the school level⁷⁹.

7. Concluding remarks

HRE serves as a powerful catalyst for promoting social justice and equality by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills to challenge discrimination and inequality. By

⁷⁷ UNITED NATIONS. GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 11 October 2023 54/7, World Programme for Human Rights Education*, 2023, cit., pp. 1-3.

⁷⁸ UNITED NATIONS, *Transforming our world. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1*, 2015.

⁷⁹ ALBANIAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, *On the approval of the National Education Strategy 2021-2026 and the action plan for its implementation*, pp. 15.

fostering an understanding of both personal rights and the rights of others, HRE empowers individuals to advocate for social justice and actively participate in democratic processes. Moreover, HRE acts as a preventive measure against violations by raising awareness about rights and available mechanisms for protection. The integration of HRE in schools is paramount for fostering a rights-conscious climate.

Albania's educational context regarding human rights has seen significant developments, particularly in the post-communist era. While there have been strides in integrating human rights principles into the education system, ongoing efforts are needed to address challenges and ensure that HRE is effectively implemented across all levels of education. The findings of the survey highlight the necessity of incorporating HRE into teacher training and qualifications. By continuing to invest in teacher training, curriculum development, and international collaborations, Albania can further strengthen its commitment to fostering a rights-conscious climate in its schools. By building awareness and understanding, encouraging respect and tolerance, empowering students, enhancing critical thinking, promoting social justice and equity, creating a safe and inclusive environment, and preparing students to be global citizens, HRE contributes significantly to the development of informed, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals, particularly in a transition country like Albania. These efforts are crucial for building a more just and equitable society, both within and beyond the educational context.

HELIONA MIÇO, JONIDA CUNGU, Human Rights Education as a means towards social justice: evaluation of Albanian legal framework on human rights education

Human Rights Education (HRE) is vital for fostering awareness of rights and responsibilities in democratic societies. It empowers individuals to engage actively in promoting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. This article examines the transformative role of HRE in Albania, focusing on teachers' pivotal role in shaping a human rights culture as part of the World Programme for HRE. It reviews framework documents, highlights gaps in teacher training, and presents survey findings on teachers' knowledge of HRE. In Albania's historical context of suppressed freedoms, the article emphasizes integrating legal knowledge into education to nurture informed, socially responsible citizens.

Key words: Human Rights Education, human rights, Albania.

HELIONA MIÇO, JONIDA CUNGU, L'educazione ai diritti umani come mezzo per la giustizia sociale: valutazione del quadro giuridico albanese sull'educazione ai diritti umani

L'educazione ai diritti umani (HRE) è fondamentale per promuovere la consapevolezza dei diritti e delle responsabilità nelle società democratiche. Consente agli individui di impegnarsi attivamente nella promozione dei diritti umani, della democrazia e dello stato di diritto. Questo articolo esamina il ruolo trasformativo dell'HRE in Albania, concentrandosi sul ruolo fondamentale degli insegnanti nel plasmare una cultura dei diritti umani come parte del Programma mondiale per l'HRE. Esamina i documenti quadro, evidenzia le lacune nella formazione degli insegnanti e presenta i risultati del sondaggio sulla conoscenza da parte degli insegnanti dell'HRE. Nel contesto storico dell'Albania caratterizzato da libertà represses, l'articolo sottolinea l'inserimento della conoscenza giuridica nell'istruzione per formare cittadini informati e socialmente responsabili.

Parole chiave: educazione ai diritti umani, diritti umani, Albania.